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BLM ALASKA
FRONTIERS

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News about BLM's National System of Public Lands in Alaska

BLM Alaska

Kim Mincer

Bob Abbey *(far right)* **stands proudly with 50 new Americorps youth after swearing them in during a ceremony on June 1 at the Abbot Loop Community Park.**

What's Inside...

2 A Road to Adventure
3 Weed Smackdown!
4 Great Outdoors
6 News Flashes

Back Cover

From the Managing Editor
Credits and subscription information

Anchorage celebrated America's Great Outdoors on June 1. BLM Director Bob Abbey came up for the event and hosted stakeholder meetings in Anchorage with state, local, and federal partners. He then traveled to Abbott Loop Community Park, located near the Campbell Tract Facility, and led a swearing-in ceremony for the Alaska Service Corps and Service Alaska Youth Corps (SAGA). He swore in 50 enthusiastic students and presented each with a signed certificate.

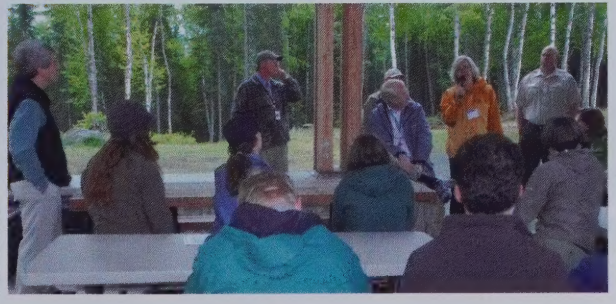
After the ceremony, the students and visitors enjoyed refreshments provided by the staff of the Campbell Creek Science Center and the Office of Communications. The students also had a great time visiting with Director Abbey and talking about their experiences in the Corps working on trails, fuels reduction and stream restoration activities. When commenting on the ceremony, Director Abbey stated, "It was inspiring to see so many young people dedicated to preserving Alaska's beautiful natural resources, not only for this generation, but for future generations."

President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative just over a year ago to encourage the American public to get involved in conservation and recreation activities on public lands. In

—continued on page 4

BLM Seeks Tweeps!

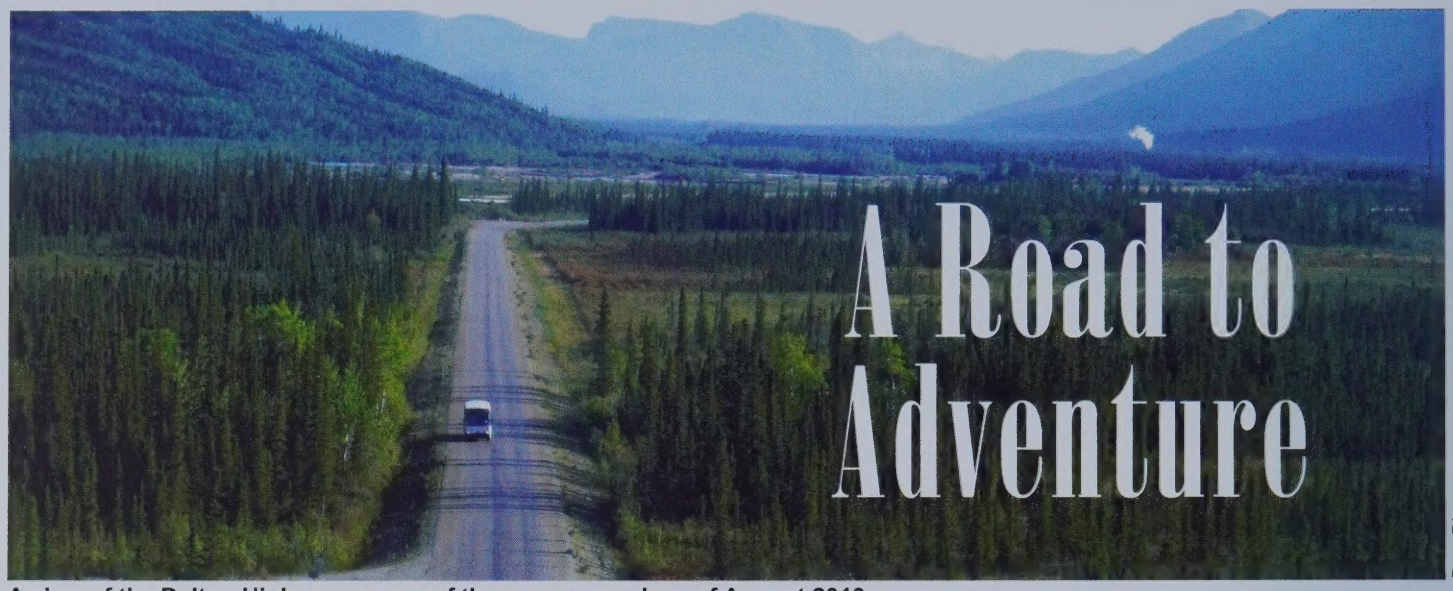
Follow BLM-Alaska on Twitter! Starting soon, we will be posting weekly tweets about BLM events and programs. Sign up to follow us on http://www.twitter.com/BLMAlaska



Kim Mincer

Bob Abbey *(far left)* **listens attentively as BLM's stakeholders talk about ways to increase youth and public involvement in outdoor activities on public lands.**

BLM Alaska



A Road to Adventure

Pam Rivers

A view of the Dalton Highway on one of the rare sunny days of August 2010.

Many people dream of visiting Alaska. Pam and Mason Rivers have been lucky enough to live the dream three times, once as tourists and twice as campground hosts for the BLM.

Pam and Mason Rivers first visited Alaska in 1997. They returned to Alaska in 2008 as campground hosts for the Tangle Lakes Campground on the Denali Highway, near Paxson and again in 2010 as campground hosts for Brushkana Creek Campground on the Denali Highway, near Cantwell. Over the years the Rivers have traveled throughout the U.S. doing similar work in places as diverse as Idaho, the Mojave Desert, and Massachusetts, where they are spending this summer. However, Alaska always seems to call them back.

"There's a sense of anticipation. It's magical," says Pam Rivers, "We love Alaska."

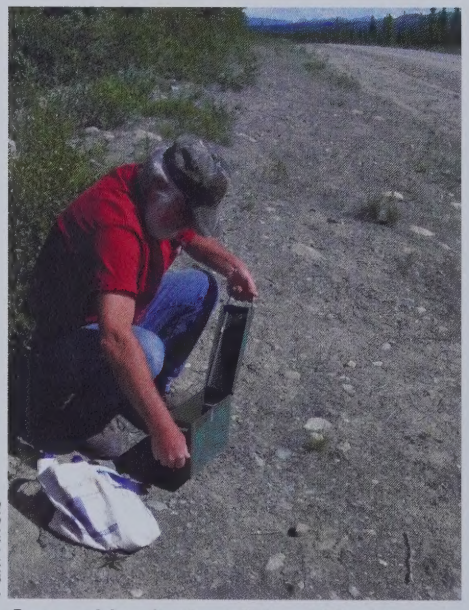
Always looking for adventure, the Rivers drove from their home in Oregon through British Columbia on the gravel Stewart-Cassiar Highway and turned onto the Alaska Highway to finish the scenic drive through the Yukon Territory and into Alaska.Their journey began in mid-April giving them enough time to take a detour to Alaska's Kenai Peninsula where they volunteered for Homer's Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival. After a little car trouble, they arrived at the BLM Glennallen Field Office to begin their summer as campground hosts.

"Brushkana was different in that you're really in the wilderness," Pam recounts of life at Brushkana Creek Campground which is approximately 33 miles from the nearest town, "It's remote so you always need to be prepared."

Even though they were somewhat isolated, the Rivers enjoyed the opportunity to view all the wildlife around Brushkana Creek, from sightings of grizzly bears to watching mother moose with their calves forage outside the window of their RV.

What Pam and Mason most enjoyed about their time as

—continued on page 3



Pam Rivers

Geocaching in the wilds of Alaska.

Pam Rivers

The Rivers enjoyed the opportunity to get up close and personal with the wildlife at Brushkana.

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Adventure —continued from page 2

campground hosts was watching all the different ways people were recreating on public lands, from fishing and hiking to geocaching. "Brushkana Creek Campground is just like a hotel in New York—international," explains Pam. Over the course of the summer, the Rivers met people from countries such as France and a man from Israel who was traveling around the world and stopped at Brushkana Creek Campground because his Alaska tour book recommended it.

For Pam and Mason, a visit to Alaska would not be complete without a new experience. After finishing their host detail in 2008, they flew all the way to Nome. In August of 2010, the Rivers drove north along the Dalton Highway to the Arctic Circle. "We heard a lot of horror stories, you know. Take spare headlights, take spare this and that, because your car is going to break down and you'll need to fix it. But it actually wasn't that bad," says Pam with a laugh, "Some places are good, but there are some places where you can only drive 30 mile per hour." Despite good stretches, Pam doesn't deny that the trip was exciting as they traveled the "Kamikaze Trail" until they reached the Arctic Circle. When asked about the experience of being so far north, Pam said that even though she and her husband had been up to the Arctic Circle in 1997, returning to such a place still filled her with awe.

Living in Alaska as a campground host for BLM can be exciting. But as Pam and Mason Rivers show, a summer in Alaska is what you make it. "The people in Alaska are lucky, there's always something new," says Pam. "It's interesting to see how things changed since we last visited. It's all so amazing. We'd love to come back."

Pam Rivers

An eagle perched along side the Bruskana River.

— Sheila Sine
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VOLUNTEERS WAGE WAR ON INVASIVE PLANTS

On a cloudy Saturday morning on July 9, about 130 volunteers, including the 12 member Team BLM, gathered at Valley of the Moon Park for the first Anchorage Weed Smackdown, a statewide campaign to protect Alaska's native environment from the dangers of invasive plants.

Invasive plants are aggressive non-native plant species that out-compete native plants for growing space. Unchecked they can quickly kill native plant species. The invasive plants under attack during the Weed Smackdown were European bird cherry trees *(Prunus padus)*, that are poisonous to moose.

As the cool summer day warmed up the weed warriors made a serious dent in the number of European bird cherry trees by uprooting them with a weed wrench. After lunch there was an awards ceremony, followed by clean-up. "It was a really successful event," states Laurie Thorpe a member of Team BLM. "We couldn't have done it without the help of all the dedicated partners, especially Allegra Hamer who works with the BLM through the Anchorage Cooperative Weed Management Area. We're really lucky to have people like her involved."

— Sheila Sine
ssine@blm.gov

Laurie Thorpe

Laurie Thorpe

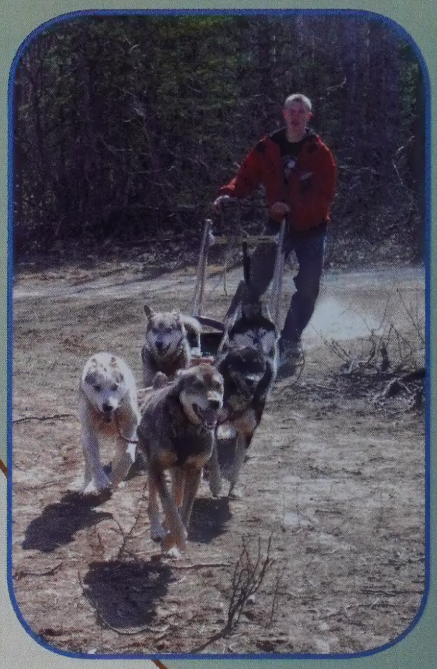
(Top Right) **A group of volunteers use a weed wrench to uproot a European bird cherry tree during the first Annual Weed Smackdown.**

(Right) **Team BLM!** *(Front Row L-R)* **Brad Muir, Christine Brune, Teresa McPherson, Elise White, Laurie Thorpe and Adriana Fisher.** *(Back Row L-R)* **Jeff Brune, Paul Krabacher, Geoff Beyersdorf, Bud Cribley, and Damon Hampel.**

Great Outdoors —continued from page 1

support of AGO, The Department of the Interior has held a series of discussions and special events with stakeholders around the country highlighting the AGO initiative and how they can become involved. To learn more about AGO go to: http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/

BLM-Alaska hosted and co-hosted several activities in support of the AGO initiative. Checkout the fun below:



Kim Mincer

Travis Beals and his dog team put on an educational mushing exhibition during Outdoor Week.

Outdoor Week 2011

More than 1,400 sixth-graders attended the 37th annual Outdoor Week at the BLM Campbell Tract May 10-13. This event was sponsored through a partnership with the Anchorage School District. Presenters from 13 different organizations and agencies provided hands-on activities about bear safety, archaeology, weather, stream flow analysis, low-impact camping, dog mushing, bird identification, soils, outdoor survival skills, gold panning, fly-tying, and more. BLM-Alaska thanks the non-BLM presenters who contributed more than 740 hours of their time to make Outdoor Week a success.

Outdoor Week provides an opportunity to connect today's children with their natural environment—a crucial first step in developing happier, healthier children, and ultimately, better stewards of the land. The event helps promote natural resources careers an outdoor recreation.

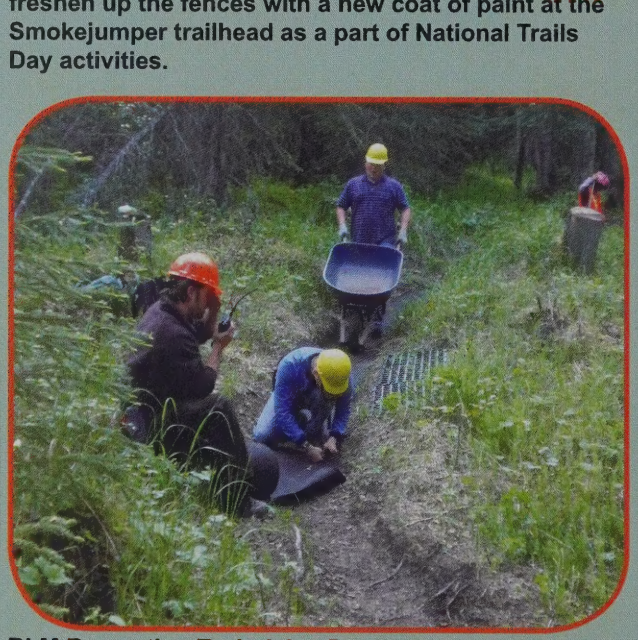
Kim Mincer

Vanessa Rathbun

BLM-Alaska employees and youth volunteers freshen up the fences with a new coat of paint at the Smokejumper trailhead as a part of National Trails Day activities.

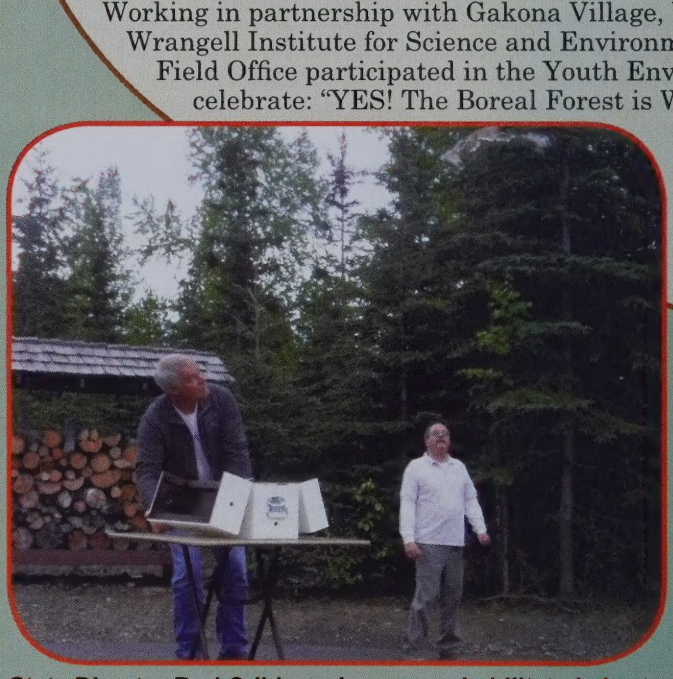
Exploring the Boreal Forest at the Youth Envi

Working in partnership with Gakona Village, Wrangel Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment, an Field Office participated in the Youth Environmer celebrate: "YES! The Boreal Forest is Wild." In learnec forest a June 2 hunt, c forest b been re to



Vanessa Rathbun

BLM Recreation Technician Bradley Johnson directs the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association (SAGA) trail crew and volunteers to "resurface" Birch Meadow Trail during National Trails Day.



Vanessa Rathbun

State Director Bud Cribley releases a rehabilitated short-eared owl back into the wild during National Trails Day.

Several six-graders go for the gold, trying their luck at gold panning during Outdoor Week.

Kim Mincer

BLM-Alaska employee Merlyn Schelske helps one of the youth participants perfect the art of fly tying.

Rachel Stumpf

Examining bugs kicked up from the river bed and collected in kicknets at Youth Environmental Summit.

ımental Summit

t. Elias National Park and Preserve, ther local non-profits; the BLM Glennallen . Summit, an annual three day summit, to e spirit of this year's theme, 5th-8th grade youth out GPS photography and waypoints in a boreal hey hiked to the Tolsona Mud Volcanoes on June 1. On d 3, 1st-4th grade youth enjoyed a boreal forest scavenger ted a model miniature wild forest, collected and examined boreal s, and learned about the habitats of boreal forest animals. "What's y exciting," says Marnie Graham, Public Affairs Specialist at GFO, "is ork with the same kids since the summit and to see them actively using the knowledge they gained there."

Taking Pride in America on National Trails Day

On June 4 over 60 volunteers of all ages gathered to celebrate the 18th anniversary of National Trails Day at the Campbell Creek Science Center. Volunteers completed several projects around the Campbell Tract facility, including resurfacing the Birch Meadow trail, performing maintenance on bike trails in Far North Bicentennial Park, pulling invasive weeds, and planting native plants and flowers that were grown in the Science Center Greenhouse. Volunteers also kicked off the beginning of the 2011 Naturalist Trailhead Program. After a free pizza lunch, the volunteers watched as State Director Bud Cribley released a short-eared owl back into the wild after successful rehabilitation by the Bird Treatment and Learning Center.

— June Lowery and Sheila Sine
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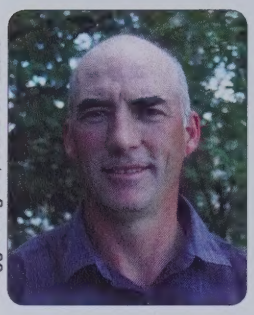
FRONTIERS Flashes

News from around Alaska

Employees Take on New Roles



Maggie Rogers, State of Alaska

Gary Baumgartner New Aviation Manager

Gary was appointed the State Aviation Manager for the BLM-Alaska in mid-June. He previously served as the Deputy Base Manager with the Alaska Smokejumpers and as a Chena Hotshot crewmember. Gary's aviation experience includes working as a Smokejumper Spotter, Air Tactical Group Supervisor, Air Tactical Supervisor and holding a private pilot's license. "I am excited about the opportunity to take on new challenges and serving the BLM-Alaska aviation community," he commented.

Vanessa Rathbun

Earle Williams named Gas Pipeline Project Manager

Earle Williams is the BLM-Alaska's new Pipeline Project Manager. Earle's new position utilizes his prior experience in both realty and mineral development. "These gas pipelines are critical to Alaska's future. Our role in processing a right-of-way application is to ensure that each project is developed responsibly with minimal impacts to public lands. I find the possibility of being a part of a project that results in a gas pipeline in Alaska exciting. It would truly be history in the making," he said.

Earle worked previously for the BLM-Alaska as Chief of the Realty and Conveyance Services Branch, Chief of the Solid Minerals Branch, and as a Mining Engineer in the Mineral Assessment program. Earle came to BLM in 1996 from the U.S. Bureau of Mines.

Maggie Rogers, State of Alaska

Kevin Oliver on detail as Acting Associate Manager at Alaska Fire Service

The BLM-Alaska welcomed Kevin Oliver as the acting Associate Manager for AFS in mid-July.

He said, "I am really fortunate to have this opportunity to be a part of the AFS Team. The next few months will undoubtedly provide challenges and accomplishments. Having had seven successful years in southern Nevada, I am just beginning to look for my next opportunity within the BLM team."

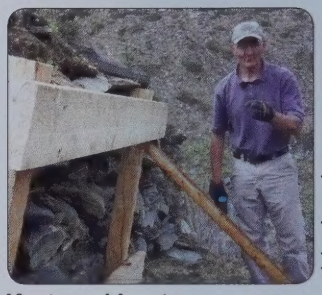
Kevin graduated Penn State University in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in Forest Science. He practiced forestry and wildland firefighting with the Idaho Department of Lands for 12 years. Kevin served as the Assistant Fire Management Officer at Lake Mead National Recreation Area and as the Fire Management Officer for BLM's Southern Nevada District Office in 2004.

Upcoming National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Lease Sale Announced

As a part of his strategy to expand responsible and safe domestic oil production, President Obama directed the Department of the Interior to conduct annual lease sales in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve (NPR-A) while respecting sensitive areas.

BLM published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing a 30-day period for interested parties to nominate or comment on available tracts within the NPR-A. The deadline to receive nominations and comments on tracts for consideration was on or before July 21, 2011. The notice was the first step in the process, leading up to a December 2011 oil and gas lease sale.

BLM-Alaska Retiree Recognized as Nation's Sustainability Hero



John Jangala

Kurt working to preserve the John Babel rock cabin.

In 2010 Kurt Sorenson quietly retired as Glennallen Field Office's maintenance worker. His carpentry skill can be seen in all of the field office's buildings, from the ergonomic desks to the buildings themselves. But Kurt did more than keep the buildings in top shape. His efforts made GFO more sustainable. During his 28 years with GFO, Kurt saved over $100,000 by using fuel-efficient vehicles, installing timers in lights to conserve electricity, and winterizing unused buildings. He recycled and reused everything, even scrap wood and cloth rags. What couldn't be recycled locally, he transported 200 miles to Anchorage. He also minimized his carbon footprint by bicycling to work every day, summer and winter, even in the Copper River Basin's subzero temperatures!

In recognition of Kurt's outstanding achievements, he will receive the U.S. Department of the Interior National Individual Environmental Achievement Award. Winning this award makes him eligible for consideration to receive a GreenGov Presidential Award, an award to recognize federal personnel, teams, and facilities that lead sustainability by example. To learn more about Kurt's career and award, please visit: http://www.doi.gov/greening/awards/2011/2011_BLMGlenallen.html

The Healing Waters of the Tangle Lakes

The BLM is pleased to partner with Project Healing Waters, Fly-Fishing to host a fishing trip at the BLM Tangle Lakes Campground from August 26–28. Project Healing Waters is a national nonprofit organization that organizes fly-fishing outings to help physically and emotionally rehabilitate wounded soldiers and veterans and their families. In addition to catching beautiful and delicious arctic grayling, participants will learn about basic fly-fishing techniques and the aquatic habitat of the scenic Tangle Lakes area. To learn more about Project Healing Waters and their fishing events visit their website at: http://www.projecthealingwaters.org

Frontiers Flashes —continued from page 6

North Slope Science Initiative on the International Stage

John Payne

Representatives from the U.S., Denmark, Greenland, Sweden and the Faroe Islands discuss terrestrial biodiversity monitoring.

The North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) is now a co-lead with the Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Greenland and Faroe Islands) for the Terrestrial Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (TCBMP). The TCBMP is one of four ecosystem-based expert monitoring groups focused on the Arctic's major complex biological communities: marine, freshwater, coastal and terrestrial. The TCBMP is responsible for developing a pan-Arctic, integrated biodiversity monitoring plan to improve coordination between existing terrestrial monitoring networks. John Payne, NSSI Executive Director, travelled to Denmark May 1-8, 2011 for the group's first meeting. The meeting produced numerous guiding documents including the Terms of Reference, an outline of the background paper to be used by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group under the Arctic Council, and an outline for the first of two international terrestrial monitoring workshops. The workshops will be held in Denmark in October 2011, and in Alaska in the late spring of 2012. For more information, and to track the progress of the TCBMP, please visit: http://cbmp.arcticportal.org

Alaska Fire Service Employees Recognized for Deepwater Horizon Efforts

Doug Stockdale

On Friday, May 20, State Director Bud Cribley presented recognition certificates to 9 BLM-Alaska employees, including 6 Smokejumpers, 2 Dispatch Coordinators, and 1 Fire Specialist, for their aid in Deepwater Horizon cleanup efforts.

Seymour the Antelope Visits Alaska

On July 15, Anchorage was introduced to BLM's Seymour the Antelope at the Campbell Creek Science Center by Anchorage's own Seymour Moose. The two Seymours greeted about 70 children and their parents at the Science Center's Moms, Pops, and Tots program. During lunch they entertained about 110 Trailside Discovery campers. "It was great to get the Seymour cousins together for a fun family reunion and to see the children enthusiastically embrace them," said Bud Cribley.

The Seymours helped deliver the BLM's message about the importance of being active on public lands and educated on the ecological needs of moose and pronghorn antelope, and the BLM's role in protecting habitats for these and other wildlife.

Eric Stuart

State Director Bud Cribley and the Seymours entertain Trailside Discovery campers during their lunch.

New 21st Century Conservation Service Corps

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) was formed by a Secretarial advisory committee through a nomination process which ended on August 1. The 21CSC is an organization to engage America's youth in the stewardship and restoration of public lands and water. The group will focus on helping youth, including those from low-income and underserved backgrounds, gain work experience and training while doing conservation work. The Advisory Committee will advise the Secretary of the Interior through the Office of Youth in the Great Outdoors and meet 4-6 times annually. For more information please visit: http://youthgo.gov/employment-program/21st-century-conservation-service-corps

BLM-Alaska Cosponsors Mine Reclamation Workshop in Fairbanks

The Biennial International Northern Latitudes Mine Reclamation workshop was held May 9-12. Topics included mining, land and urban reclamation, and restoration methods. The BLM presented information about the remedial investigation work underway at the Red Devil Mine in southwestern Alaska. The workshop brought state and federal governments, Canadian agencies, industry, consultants, Alaska Natives, northern First Nations, and Inuit groups together. Some participants toured the Pogo, True North/ Fort Knox, and Usibelli mines.

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BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS... From the Managing Editor

It was one of life's defining moments—a glimpse of a large ash-gold wildcat crossing BLM Road only yards away from the Anchorage Field Office—where it paused to glance my way before disappearing into the woods as if it had never been. I was close enough to see black-tufted ears and a black-tipped tail, golden eyes, and very long legs ending in feline-like fluffy large paws. I'll never forget it. Nor that instant we made eye contact. It changed my feelings about this 730-acre tract of land in the heart of Anchorage! I later learned that wildcat I saw was a lynx—the only cat native to Alaska, and possibly weighing as much as 40 pounds. I also learned I wasn't the first person at Campbell Tract to have a lynx encounter. That moment when I saw it crossing BLM Road about 100 yards from the field office, transported me into the wild, raw, great outdoors in a way nothing else could. Experience Alaska's public lands this summer. Experience a Lynx Moment.

Chuck Lovely

An elusive lynx, spotted briefly on Campbell Tract.

— Karen J. Laubenstein
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